West Lothian Local Development Plan

West Lothian Local Development Plan 2 Evidence Report	
Schedule	**15. Tourism and Culture**
Information required by the Act and NPF4 regarding the issue addressed in this section	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended: • section 15(5)(a) ‘the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district’ • Section 15(5)(ch) the desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including in particular, but not limited to, live music venues) in the district National Planning Framework 4 (adopted 13 February 2023) • Policy 30 - LDPs should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. Relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies should also be taken into account. The spatial strategy should also identify areas of pressure where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts on the environment or the quality of life and health and wellbeing of local communities, and where further development is not appropriate • Policy 31 - LDPs should recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts This schedule aims not to repeat the content of other topics covered by the LDP2 Evidence Report. Other schedules which should be read alongside this schedule on tourism and culture are: • Historic places
Links to Evidence referenced in this schedule	• Visit Scotland, International Tourism Performance 2023 • Scottish Tourism Alliance, Scotland Outlook 2030 • West Lothian Council, Visit West Lothian Strategic Plan • West Lothian Council, West Lothian Shale Trail • West Lothian Council, West Lothian Public Art • Visit West Lothian, Map of Things to Do • Scottish Government, Creative Industries • Screen Scotland, Economic Value of the Screen Sector in Scotland 2021 • Film on Forth
Summary of Evidence	

Purpose, scope and structure of this schedule

This schedule focuses on tourism and culture within West Lothian. The schedule and its evidence are set out in the following sections:

1. National and Local Context for Tourism
2. West Lothian Visitor Statistics and Country Parks
3. Culture and Heritage
4. Public Art
5. Creative Industries

Part 1 – National and Local Context for Tourism

1.1 Visit Scotland highlights that in 2023 international travel to Scotland continued to show strong signs of recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The number of visits, the number of nights, as well as visitor spending in Scotland, surpassed 2019 and 2022 levels.

1.2 The vision for 21st century tourism set out in 'Scotland Outlook 2030' is "about creating sustainable growth with everyone playing an active role. It's about purpose and profit in equal measure, protecting people and place". The vision document sets out that 21st century tourism is centred around creativity, innovation, care for the environment, Scotland's people and future generations.

1.3 Scotland Outlook 2030 also implies that there are several key factors which will influence the long term growth, development and success of Scotland's tourism industry. These are:

- Scotland's environment - The climate emergency is starting to change the way we think about where we travel and stay, how we get there and the impact we have on our global environment and the destinations we visit.

- Scotland's core markets – particularly the domestic market – will remain important; new markets will emerge; and we will continue to build on our competitive and unique strengths that we have across all our assets.

- Scotland's landscape and scenery, heritage and culture, people, activities, events and festivals and business events will continue to draw visitors.

1.4 The strategy describes how climate change presents the biggest threat to our society as we understand it today. It sets out estimates that globally tourism contributes around 8% of carbon emissions. These come from aviation, transport, accommodation, activities, the growing number of travellers, consumption and waste.

1.5 The Visit West Lothian Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was the last local tourism strategy produced by Visit West Lothian. This has three priorities:

- To promote West Lothian as a visitor destination
- To lead on networking and collaborative working within the sector
- To encourage quality and authentic experiences

1.6 The coronavirus pandemic has delayed preparation of a new local tourism strategy. Planning has been informed by Economic Development that a new strategy is likely to come forward in 2025. The Proposed Plan will need to take account of this strategy.

Part 2 – West Lothian Visitor Statistics & Country Parks

2.1 Currently, the council and Visit West Lothian do not hold up-to-date data for overall visitor numbers to West Lothian and data on the contribution of tourism to the West Lothian economy. The most recent data from the Visit West Lothian Strategic Plan is from 2015. The Visit West Lothian Strategic Plan states there were 438,445 visitors to West Lothian with a contribution of £168.56m to the West Lothian economy. There were 361,000 overnight visitors and 776,000 visitor days to West Lothian. Up-to-date data will need to be obtained on the above points prior to the Proposed Plan being published.

2.2 The Visit West Lothian website provides an interactive map with a wide range of tourist attractions across West Lothian.

2.3 The council owns and manages three country parks at the following locations:

- Almondell & Calderwood
- Beecraigs
- Polkemmet

2.4 The total visitor numbers for each country park from 2019 are set out below:

Country Park	April 2019 – March 2020	April 2020 – March 2021	April 2021 – March 2022	April 2022 – March 2023	April 2023 – March 2024
Almondell & Calderwood	166,978	275,432	201,859	210,327	188,968
Beecraigs	1,112,856	1,411,198	1,002,966	932,718	998,229
Polkemmet	123,007	291,336	226,693	202,670	366,751

2.5 There was a trend in increased visitor numbers across all country parks in 2020/21 due to the coronavirus pandemic meaning people were travelling less outside their local authority area. Both Beecraigs and Polkemmet country parks have seen increased visitor numbers between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

2.6 Beecraigs Country Park also contains a caravan park. The data provides by the council's Parks and Woodlands team highlights a 10% increase in 2022/23 on 2019/20 figures for caravan visitors at Beecraigs. There was a 2% decrease in visitor numbers between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

CARAVAN BEDNIGHTS TOTAL	**2017/18**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**
TRENDS	Car 7413 Camp 1958 LL 620 T 9991	Car 6957 Camp 1765 LL 495 T 9217	Car 7554 Camp 1756 LL 605 T 9915	Car 1924 Camp 211 LL 87 T 2222	Car 6440 Camp 814 LL 373 T 7627	Car 9045 Camp1496 LL 407 T 10948	Car 8746 Camp 1664 LL 361 T 10,771

Increase / decrease	26% inc	8% dec	8% inc	78% dec on 2019/20	23% dec on 2019/20	44% inc on 2021/22 10% inc on 2019/20	2% decrease on 2022/23

2.7 Overall, there is an increase in nights spent at the caravan park by all types of vehicle between 2017/18 and 2023/24. The decrease in visitor numbers in 2020/21 and 2021/22 is explained by the coronavirus pandemic. There is a slight decrease in overall visitor numbers by 2% between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Part 3 – Culture and Heritage

3.1 Historic Environment Scotland has provided the council with data on visitor numbers to its three sites in West Lothian (see below table). To note, Cairnpapple Hill was closed during the coronavirus pandemic and Linlithgow Palace was only partially open in 2022 and 2023 due to masonry works being carried out. The latter point explains why visitor numbers are almost half that of 2019. Data held on Torphichen Preceptory is limited to 2018 and 2019.

3.2 The council should continue dialogue with HES to see if visitor numbers to Linlithgow Palace increase to pre-covid levels, in order to gain an accurate picture of whether visitor numbers are causing pressures on this historic asset.

Site	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Cairnpapple Hill	2,614	1,662	-	-	2,716	1,964
Linlithgow Palace	94,718	103,312	12,128	2,489	7,583	53,463
Torphichen Preceptory	545	1,103	-	-	-	-

3.3 The National Trust for Scotland (NTS) has one property within West Lothian, The House of the Binns, which is an A listed building dating from the early 17th century. The council has contacted NTS to obtain visitor data but has not received a reply.

3.4 Hopetoun House, a category A listed building dating from the 18th century and seat of the Hope family, is one of West Lothian's major tourist attractions. Hopetoun House has provided the council with annual visitor numbers over the past 7 years. Visitor numbers are steadily returning to pre-covid levels following a large drop in visitor numbers during the pandemic.

Hopetoun House Visitor Numbers	
Year	Footfall
Jan-Dec 2023	49,182
Jan-Dec 2022	46,748
Jan-Dec 2021	37,996
Jan-Dec 2020	37,393
Jan-Dec 2019	62,874
Jan-Dec 2018	52,039
Jan-Dec 2017	48,117

3.5 Hopetoun Estates has provided the council with data on visitor numbers to Midhope Castle. These are set out in the table below. Visitor numbers, including a large amount of international visitors, to Midhope Castle have significantly increased with the popularity of Outlander (Midhope Castle is the fictional 'Lallybroch' in the Outlander series). 2024 is expected to see the largest number of visitors to Midhope Castle.

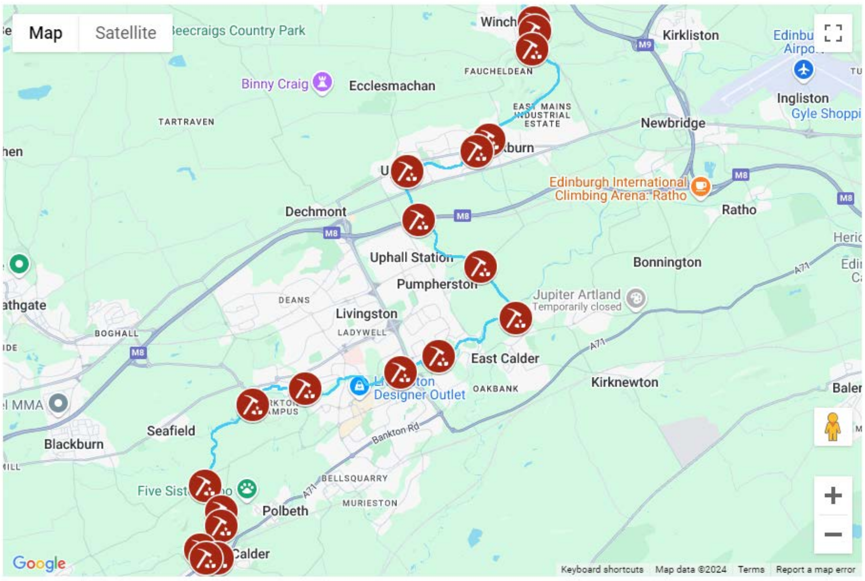
Year	Visitor Numbers
From April 2017	8754
2018	30831
2019	42082
2020	2929 (Covid)
2021	9730 (Covid)
2022	33054
2023	58715
To September 2024	58395

3.6 Planning permission was granted in 2021 and 2024 for the development of a whisky distillery in the grounds of Midhope Castle with a long term aspiration for conversion of the castle to a hotel associated with the distillery. To date, these developments have not been progressed.

3.7 Although the area is not considered to be one where tourism pressure is causing adverse impacts, the Proposed Plan should consider whether a development brief is required for development of the grounds of Midhope Castle, as well as ensuring infrastructure and facilities to support the continued increase in visitor numbers.

3.8 Completed in 2020, the West Lothian Shale Trail is a 16 mile walking and cycling route from West Calder to Winchburgh. The aim of the trail is to create an inspiring, enjoyable off-road trail, which will tell the oil shale story, enabling local people and visitors to engage with and learn about local shale heritage.

SHALE TRAIL



3.9 The evidence above links to the schedule on historic places with many tourist and cultural attractions either being listed buildings or scheduled monuments. Careful management will be required to ensure these attractions maintain their historic significance for which they were designated for whilst accommodating visitors.

Part 4 – Public Art

4.1 The council has mapped the locations of public art facilities within West Lothian. The map on the council's website will need to be updated given the data behind it is from 2018.

4.2 The public art facilities have predominately been delivered through developer contributions towards public art in the last plan period.

4.3 LDP Policy ENV 34 sets out that "developers of major residential and public buildings will be required to fund or contribute to the cost of works of art appropriate to the setting and scale of their surrounding area", in line with Supplementary Guidance. In addition, "the implementation of the M8 Art project on a site at Junction 3 and other suitable locations is promoted".

4.4 The 'Developer Contributions Towards Public Art' Supplementary Guidance sets out the circumstances in which the council seeks developer contributions towards public art. These are as follows:

Residential Development

- 10-49 residential units: £150 per unit
- 50+ residential units: £250 per unit

Retail Development

- 1,500-4,999 m^2 gross floorspace: £8 per m^2 of gross development area
- 5000 m^2+ gross floorspace: £12 per m^2 of gross development area

All of the above figures are to be indexed from Q2 2017.

4.5 Affordable housing was exempt from public art contributions between January 2018 and December 2019 in an attempt to encourage further building of affordable housing.

4.6 Industrial, office, non-retail and commercial development are generally exempt from public art contributions, except for major and high profile developments within the M8 corridor and in the Livingston sub regional centre (Almondvale). In these circumstances, contributions will be secured through a Section 75 legal agreement or a condition for details of on-site public art.

4.7 As of July 2024, the council received contributions totalling £569,317.34 towards public art over the current plan period since the West Lothian LDP was adopted (between 1 September 2018 and 26 July 2024).

4.8 The below lists the public art projects delivered since the adoption of the current LDP in 2018:

- Past and Present and Impressions at East Calder Partnership Centre
- Four underpasses at Carmondean/Deans in Livingston
- Bus shelter decals on three bus shelters on Winchburgh Main Street
- Almondell Cemetery
- Whitburn Partnership Centre

4.9 The council will consider whether to continue with a specific policy for public art, and developer contributions towards it, in the next LDP given that NPF4 Policy 31 (a) does not cover the matter of developer contributions towards public art.

Part 5 – Creative Industries

5.1 According to the Scottish Government, creative industries make a £5 billion contribution to Scottish economy. The creative industry is a growing sector of the Scottish economy with 15,000 businesses employing more 70,000 people.

5.2 The screen sector has seen significant growth in Scotland with estimated spending on film, TV and audio-visual production in Scotland rising from £398 million in 2019 to £617 million in 2021. Full time equivalent jobs in the screen sector rose from 10,280 FTE jobs to 10,870 FTE jobs between 2019 and 2021.

5.3 The Pyramids Business Park, just outside of Bathgate, enabled Amazon's The Rig, Good Omens 2 and Anansi Boys to film their entire production in Scotland, filming on-location and in studio. Planning permission in principle was been granted in 2022 for the expansion of The Pyramids for an extension to the building being used for film and TV production. In addition, filming has also taken place in recent years at Linlithgow Palace (Outlander) Midhope Castle (Outlander) and at Hopetoun House (Outlander, Belgravia and Princess Switch).

5.4 Film on Forth (a collaboration between Visit West Lothian and Visit Falkirk) provides a resource for tourists to explore filming locations in West Lothian.

5.5 The MGA Academy (part of the Scottish Institute of Theatre, Dance, Film & Television) is located in Livingston offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the performing arts, including courses in music, dance, theatre and drama, as well as film and television studies.

5.6 There are facilities within West Lothian that provide space for artists and allow for exhibiting art. The Howden Park Centre in Livingston contains an art studio and art gallery, Burgh Halls in Linlithgow contains an art exhibition and Jupiter Artland.

5.7 The Regal Theatre in Bathgate provides space for theatre and live music and is a valued community facility. The Dreadnought and Purple Orange in Bathgate provide a live music venues in Bathgate. The Howden Park Centre in Livingston is also a venue used for live music and stand up comedy.

5.8 In terms of implications for the Proposed Plan, it will need to be considered whether any specific policies are required for the creative sector beyond those stated in NPF 4 Policy 31.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

This will summarise the steps taken by the planning authority to seek the views of all relevant stakeholders. This will also summarise the views expressed, and explain how they have been taken account of in the Evidence Report.

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

This will include statements from stakeholders highlighting their agreement or the areas they dispute.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

This will cover what the evidence means for the plan, e.g. the spatial strategy, the Delivery Programme or plan preparation.

Based on the evidence the proposed plan is required to:

1. Consider continuing a specific policy for contributions towards public art given that developer contributions towards public art provision is not covered under NPF 4 Policy 31 (a). In addition, it will also need to be considered whether a specific project at Junction 3 of the M8 is still required.
2. Consider whether a development brief should be prepared for Midhope Castle and its surroundings to help manage development and support visitor numbers.
3. Consider whether any specific policies are required for supporting jobs and investment in the creative sector beyond the policy criteria of NPF 4 Policy 31.